## Technical Bulletin



#### For General Permit NCG550000

NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY

Revised May 24, 2010

#### **Who Is Covered Under This Permit?**

This permit covers discharges of treated domestic wastewater from single family residences at flows not to exceed 1000 gallons per day. Other types of facilities discharging less than 1000 gallons per day of treated domestic wastewater may be covered under this permit with the approval of the Division.

#### **Changes in Reissued General Permit**

The previous General Permit expired July 31, 2007. The permit has been reissued for an additional five years. The new permit contains the following significant changes from the previous version:

- Dechlorination is now required for all facilities installing chlorination after the effective date of the final permit.
- Risers will be required on all new septic tanks making them easier to locate.

There were also changes made to the Notice of Intent (NOI) which is filed to gain coverage under this permit. The NOI requires updated buffer requirements aligning with 15A NCAC 02T.0506, and the sign-off of a professional engineer for all new systems.

#### **Key Permit Requirements**

- Annual sampling of the effluent from the system is required. The parameters to be sampled can be found in Part I, Section A. A North Carolina certified laboratory should be contacted to perform the analytical monitoring. A list of certified laboratories can be obtained by calling the Division.
- All samples should be collected before the effluent joins or is diluted by any other wastestream, water or substance. (Part II, Section D:1)
- The permittee shall give notice to the Division of any planned physical alterations or additions to the system that could significantly increase the quantity of pollutants discharged or introduce new pollutants to the discharge. These alterations include any types of residence/facility expansions. (Part II, Section F:3)
- Submission of monitoring reports is not required. All monitoring information must be retained on site for a period of 3 years. (Part II, Section E:1)

#### **Minimum Treatment System Requirements**

System requirements for existing (previously constructed) systems are a septic tank, sand filter and

disinfection apparatus. All existing facilities adding chlorination after August 1, 2007 will also be required to add dechlorination. System requirements for a new (not yet constructed) system are a septic tank, primary and secondary (or recirculating) sand filters, chlorination/dechlorination (or equivalent means of disinfection) and post-aeration apparatus.

#### **Operation and Maintenance**

In order to protect water quality and to ensure proper operation of domestic wastewater systems, the following measures should be taken:

- Check the septic tank every year to see if solids should be removed.
- Have the septic tank pumped out every three to five years. Contact a local septic service/repair company from the yellow pages.
- Inspect disinfection and dechlorination equipment (if applicable) weekly to confirm proper operation.
- If a chlorinator and/or dechlorinator is installed, replace tablets whenever necessary.

#### **Tips for Maintaining Your Septic Tank**

The septic tank is usually a watertight concrete box buried in the ground outside the house. Wastewaters from the house, including the toilets, shower, bathtub, washing machine and dishwasher flow into the tank. Heavier solid materials settle to the bottom and the liquid flows out of the tank into a soil drainfield. Both the septic tank and drainfield must be properly maintained for the system to work correctly for many years. Some tips for maintaining your septic system are:

- Do not put too much water into the septic system. Try to conserve water wherever possible.
- Do not add materials such as chemicals, sanitary napkins, or other foreign objects.
- Restrict the use of your garbage disposal.
- Do not pour grease or cooking oils down the drain.
- Have the solids pumped out of the septic tank every 3-5 years.
- Keep automobiles and heavy equipment off of the septic tank and drain field.

#### **Chlorination and Dechlorination Tablets**

If the treatment system has a chlorinator or dechlorinator, it is important that there is an adequate supply of tablets to ensure proper operation. There will usually be a white PVC pipe sticking up from the chlorinator/dechlorinator where the tablets should be inserted. Tablets can be

obtained from most plumbing supply stores. Make sure that the tablets are certified for wastewater use. Chlorine tablets are NOT the same type of chlorine used for swimming pools.

#### **Signs of Septic System Problems**

Some of the signs that your septic system may be having problems are:

- Sewage backing up into your toilets, tubs or sinks.
- Slowly draining fixtures; particularly after it has rained.
- The smell of raw sewage accompanied by soggy soil over the drainfield.
- Sewage discharging over the ground or in nearby ditches or woods.

If you see any of these signs, contact a septic repair company from the yellow pages in your area.

#### Right-of-Way

Issuance of this general permit does not relieve the permittee from obtaining all necessary right-of-way or easement rights to discharge wastewater on or across another property.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

## 1) Do I need to submit the monitoring results annually?

No. The submission of monitoring reports for this permit is not required. There are no standardized Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) associated with this permit. All monitoring results should be kept on site for three years. The Division may request these reports for review at any time. (Part II, Section E:1)

# 2) Do I need to employ a certified wastewater treatment plant operator to manage and run the system?

Not at this time. The Division's Operator Training and Certification Unit does not currently plan to classify these types of facilities for the purposes of needing a certified operator. The requirement was left in the permit at this time with clarification, in the event that classification was assigned in the future. (Part II, Section C:1)

#### 3) Where do I find my stream classification?

The stream classification, i.e. WS-IV, C, Tr, etc. can usually be found in the Certificate of Coverage. If you are unsure of your stream classification, you can contact the NPDES Permitting Program.

## 4) Does a certified lab need to be used to analyze samples?

Yes, a North Carolina certified lab must be used to perform analytical monitoring. The only exception to this rule is when measuring the value of pH. pH values should be measured in the field because they may change considerably between when the sample is pulled and it is analyzed at the laboratory. A list of certified labs is available from the Division.

#### 5) What If I Sell My Property?

The Division views changes of name or ownership as a minor modification and requires the Director's approval. Name and ownership changes require you to complete a Name/Ownership Change Form. The forms are available by contacting the NPDES Permitting Program at (919) 807-6300.

### 6) When does my permit expire and how do I renew it?

The expiration date of the permit is on the first page of the General Permit. This General Permit expires on July 31, 2012. Approximately 180 days prior the expiration of the General Permit, you will receive a renewal notice in the mail from the Division.

#### **Contact Us**

For additional information, please contact us at:

N.C. Division of Water Quality Surface Water Protection Section NPDES Program 1617 Mail Service Center Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1617

Phone: (919) 807-6300 Fax: (919) 807-6495

You may also contact your local Regional Office at:

Asheville: (828) 296-4500 Mooresville: (704) 663-1699 Winston-Salem: (336) 771-5000

Raleigh: (919) 791-4200 Fayetteville: (910) 433-3300 Washington: (252) 946-6481 Wilmington: (910) 796-7215

The NPDES Permitting Program can be found online at <a href="http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/swp/ps/npdes">http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/swp/ps/npdes</a>. Another source of information is the DENR Customer Service Center. They may be reached at 1-877-NC ENR 4 U (1-877-623-6748). An additional source of information is the North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance. They have information on how to minimize pollutants at various types of industries. They may be reached at (919) 715-6500.